CATHOLIC BOOK WEEK

THE

Commonweal

The Irony of Machado de Assis

by William L. Grossman

England and The Randall Report

by Michael P. Fogarty

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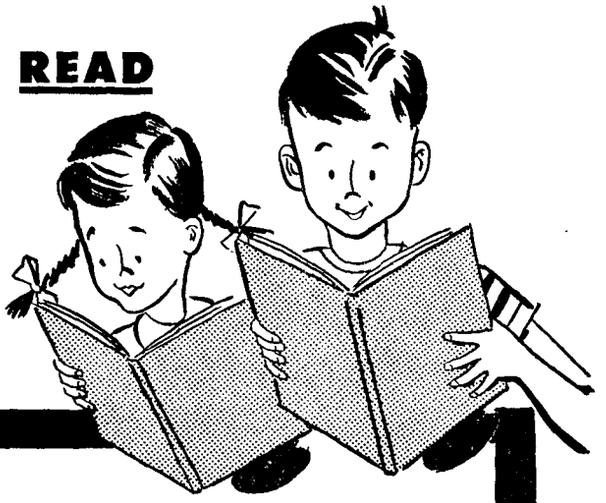

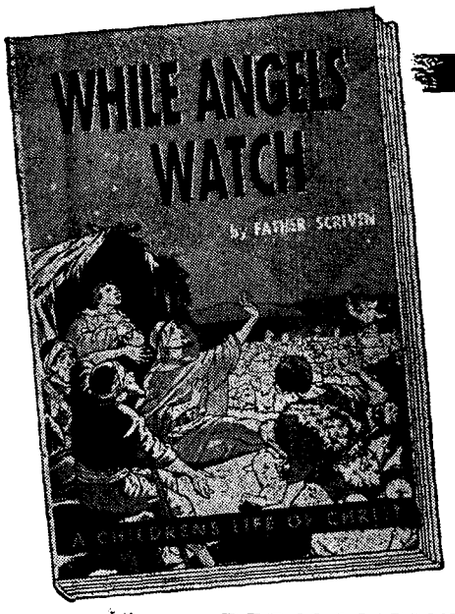

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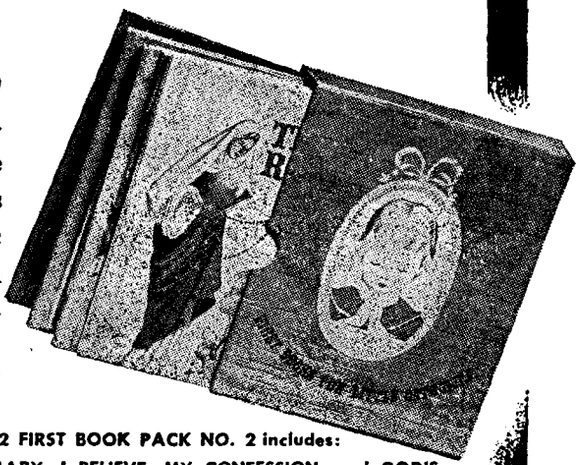

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THE
Commonweal
week by week

THE LIMITS OF PARTISANSHIP

POLITICAL democracy, as we have practiced it in the West, is founded upon certain assumptions concerning human nature and human motives, and it is dependent upon the widespread acceptance of these assumptions for its survival. It assumes, for example, the citizen's rationality, his ability, once evidence has been presented to him, to distinguish the true from the false, the reality from the myth. It further assumes the citizen's basic benevolence, his natural preference for good over evil. And it assumes that the citizen is decently motivated, that, on the whole, he will act to secure the common good rather than some mean advantage.

Joined to these assumptions, there must exist in a democracy, a tolerance for human fallibility, a readiness to believe that the mistakes of one's opponents are usually "honest" mistakes. Alexander Pope's resigned "to err is human" sums up the spirit which has made modern democracy possible.

This is, of course, the spirit of the Enlightenment. Optimistic, easy, and not especially profound, this spirit is open to attack on the philosophical and theological levels as superficial and unreal. But, on the political level, it has worked, and that is its day-to-day test. On the basis of these assumptions, men have actually governed themselves rationally and human freedom has been given new dimensions in the world.

But they are, indeed, merely practical assumptions, valid only so long as they provide the determining spirit of a nation's politics. Widely challenged in the practical order, they quickly fall, and with them falls democracy's whole edifice. Democracy has room for the demagogue, for the man who appeals to hatred and to fear, but it cannot survive his popular triumph.

Democracy, by definition, imposes definite limits upon partisanship. These limits demand of public leaders a certain tolerance of their opponents' mistakes and a certain generosity in interpreting their opponents' motives. They forbid political leaders to cultivate hatred and fear for partisan advantage.

Such limits are, of course, ideal. In practice they are frequently violated by politicians of both parties. Mr. Truman, for example, violated them often and loud as part of his "give 'em hell" technique. And the twenty-year attempt by the Democrats to place personal blame for the Depression upon Mr. Herbert Hoover (as though Mr. Hoover willed it and actually enjoyed it) was clearly dangerous demagoguery. To the extent that it succeeded, the nation's political life was poisoned.

Now a new demagoguery is being heard, and it seems more dangerous than any we have heard before because it differs from the others not only in degree but in kind. It is the Republican charge of "treason" made against a whole body of Americans and a whole generation of American leadership during the past twenty years.

We are not thinking here of Senator McCarthy. His current "Twenty Years of Treason" speech is one he could have been expected to make this election year. We are not thinking of Senator William Jenner either. His recent charge that the Truman Administration deliberately sought to lose the Korean war and deliberately sent American soldiers to their deaths might almost have been expected from one who called General Marshall a "front man for traitors." We are thinking, rather, of those "responsible" and "respectable" leaders of the Republican Party who have joined their more primitive colleagues in an effort to pin the "traitor" label on the Democrats. We are thinking especially of men like Mr. Dewey, Mr. Brownell, and Mr. Hall.

PRESIDENT Eisenhower has (of course) recognized the dangers of a too passionate GOP partisanship. The times are too serious to indulge in partisanship to the extreme, he has said, and he has stated his belief that there are good Americans in both parties. But the President has also said that he knows of no way he can stop extreme partisan statements except among members of his own executive family. When a reporter read him some typi-

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cal statements from recent Republican speeches, Mr. Eisenhower became impatient and said he would not comment on personalities.

Well, lofty sentiments are fine and no one can doubt the President's good will; but sentiments remain merely sentiments until they are applied to concrete situations, and since this is a world full of personalities the President will some day have to recognize that they exist. He cannot forever maintain his attitude that official Republican politics and politicians are no concern of his.

Perhaps this country can be saved from excessive partisanship by the occasional invocation of high sounding generalities at the White House. Perhaps platitudes really work. Perhaps the "eggheads" are really eggheads and there's nothing to worry about in the current political climate. But we doubt it. For while Mr. Eisenhower disclaims responsibility for the "wild men" in his party and comforts us with truisms, the "wild men" have been joined by many of the previously civilized, and what was once isolated demagoguery has become a national political movement. The limits of partisanship have already been violated to a dangerous degree.

POST OFFICE DEFICITS

FOR a century and more the Post Office Department has found itself "in the red" the greater part of the time. Under Republicans or Democrats, spenders or economizers, the Department has been able to make ends meet on but a baker's dozen of occasions. That is the general pattern. But it is also true that the deficit has reached a record figure.

At the same time the Eisenhower Administration is bent on cutting expenditures wherever such economies will provide any considerable headway toward balancing the national budget. Postmaster General Summerfield has now come up with a formula which, by cutting expenses here, raising rates there and shifting certain cost items to other departments, would shave the deficit of half a billion and more to a mere ninety millions within a year—provided wages are not raised in order to obtain more efficient personnel.

Part of the present dissatisfaction with the Department comes from a decline in service. There are fewer local deliveries, at times startling delays in transmission, even within the same city, and the like. So that when comparisons are made with postal systems in other lands, quality and extent of service have a place alongside lower costs per citizen.

American postal operations have from the beginning been conceived in terms of service. Their primary object is to further the widest dissemination of information in our political democracy. Hence the special rates for newspapers and magazines—and free postal distribution for country newspapers within their county of issue. That is also the reason for the low rates for mailing books. A secondary motive is to supply such postal facilities as will stimulate the growth of commerce.

These remain the basic objectives of our postal system. That we deliver letters at the lowest rate of any country in the world should be a source of national pride. If certain publishing empires appear to benefit unduly from second class mailing privileges, necessary adjustments can be made. But the interests of government economy should not be permitted to prevail over the traditional objective of the widest possible dissemination of news and political opinion. As the world grows smaller and man's powers of destruction increase in geometric proportions, the need of an informed citizenry has never been of greater moment.

NEXT WEEK

FRANCIS J. KEENAN writes on the situation of the Republican Party at the end of a year of national responsibility:

"As a sort of display window of Republican campaign hopes, the Lincoln Day box supper could hardly avoid being a mirror of the very real difficulties and divisions confronting the party. For the people themselves, whose convictions, values and interests are involved, were all present. In them, comprising as they do the various fractions of the party, lie the sources of the Republican problems. And the responsibilities of government have brought to the surface all the differences. . . ."

ROAD TO FREEDOM

SOME months ago the United States offered $100,000, cash on the line, for the first MIG to be delivered into our hands by an enemy pilot in Korea. For those who could not be first, $50,000 was offered, a substantial enough consolation prize, with the offer good until withdrawn by the sponsor.

For sheer B-picture melodrama, it would be hard to beat this entire conception. Yet no wholesale defection by enemy pilots was produced, and for many weeks the grand prize went begging. Eventually the $100,000 first prize was won by a North Korean, but all in all the experiment cannot be called an unqualified success.

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Many reasons have been advanced for the failure of what seemed to many a sure-fire scheme. Communist pilots are closely watched, precisely in order to avoid such escape flights. And in many ways this plan smacked too much of the ad-man's dream. Yet even if this particular plan was not well conceived, the idea of encouraging escapes from Communist-ruled countries is nonetheless a good one.

In recent weeks a suggestion to foster such escapes was made by Igor Gouzenko, Russian code-clerk whose own flight from the Soviet embassy led to the exposure of the Communist spy ring inside Canada. What the democracies should offer, according to Gouzenko, is not money but a guarantee of political sanctuary and the chance at employment commensurate with the escapee's training and background. This latter point is important; as Gouzenko pointed out, a highly trained Soviet scientist or military man is not likely to desert if he is sure to end up working at a menial job.

Now Senator Douglas of Illinois has added his voice to those who are seeking to encourage flight from Communist countries. In a letter to President Eisenhower, Senator Douglas urges that he make a statement promising refuge and jobs to diplomatic and military officers who flee to the West, preferably bringing with them papers and information of value to us. In the opinion of Senator Douglas, a considerable number of such potential escapees "are deterred from doing this by doubts that they would be received, and fears that they might be handed back to Communism and the firing squad." A solemn promise of sanctuary by the President of the United States, broadcast by every possible means behind the Iron Curtain, could have tremendous repercussions.

No doubt such escapees from Communist countries would have to be carefully checked, and the information they brought with them very carefully evaluated by our intelligence services. But the risks involved are not insuperable, and the potential gains are great. Coming, as they do, soon after reports that a key Soviet diplomat in Japan has sought sanctuary from the U. S., suggestions like these should receive serious consideration.

THE WAITING GAME

WHAT a display-piece of ironies the war in Indochina has become: the overextended French curtly refusing help from South Korea, telling the United States that military victory is not at all the only—or even the most desirable—goal in the war; the Administration's new military policy of atomic retaliation now put to a sudden and embarrassing test, and the test hastily refused; the Republican Congressional leaders who had been the first to call for a defeat of the Communists are now terrified by the prospect of a "new Korea."

There is a profound confusion about principles and aims both here and in Paris. And concealed by the crash of semantics and debate, Indochina may fall to Ho Chi Minh.

The French don't want to lose, but neither are they anxious to win. Victory would require a military and political effort which is beyond their strength. They don't want the help of outside troops for the very valid reason that it would almost certainly provoke the entry of the Chinese army. Their strategy is to win a more favorable military position, which would convince Ho Chi Minh that he ought to negotiate a settlement. And there is a strong undercurrent of opinion in France, based on the fact that France is likely to lose its interests in Indochina no matter what the outcome of the war, that a settlement ought to be negotiated immediately, regardless of the military situation. This state of mind is not one which will hearten troops or the native nationalists. It is simply part of the casualty list of modern ideological history.

In the United States, the most recent military crisis in Indochina has served to prove how deeply the next election is influencing our cold-war policies. The new atomic retaliation plan is useful for balancing the budget; it is remarkably useless for winning the Indochinese war. And Congress is torn between the prospect of an "Eisenhower war" and the fall of South Asia to Communism. That is not to say that there must be the intervention of United States troops to save the situation. It is to say that many of our political leaders are anxious to save Indochina so long as saving Indochina will cost them no votes.

Ultimate policy for Indochina must be made by the French and Indochinese as long as they shed the blood. But an outsider must remark that it seems unrealistic for them to talk of settlements at a time when continuing the war is obviously to Russia's advantage. It can afford the waiting game.

America must come to a cold, non-political decision about how far we can intervene without bringing the Chinese in. If we can send aircraft mechanics, then perhaps we can take over the training of the Viet Namese army. If we can furnish airlifts, perhaps we can also furnish a naval blockade of the coast. This is a decision which must be made by the National Security Council. When we have calculated how far we can go, we must press to that limit. It is a dangerous enough game, but the cost of losing it is a Southeast Asia under Communist domination.

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ANATHEMA SIT

IT seems to be open season on "liberal Catholics" again and, in the spirit of the times, apparently anything goes. Within the past few months in certain sections of the Catholic press, purges have been carried out regularly; a self-appointed Inquisition has tried the "liberals," who are invariably found guilty, and then burned them at the editorial stakes for the weekend edification of the righteous. Here are only a few of the charges brought against the "liberals":

The "liberal" thinks: ". . . that his soul's salvation is a part-time work; that the Church ought to make a concordat with him personally. The 'liberal' Catholic likes: the company of the faithless more than the company of the faithful [he consorts with sinners]; the catch phrases of the day more than eternal truths; both God and Mammon, but is more at home with the latter; to solve in minutes problems which stagger the Church for years; to be an outstanding Catholic, without being outstandingly Catholic. His main concern is not how to please God but how to please himself without displeasing God." (From *Pulse,* a monthly bulletin for Holy Name Society leaders of the Green Bay, Wis., diocese; reprinted with approval on the first page of the *Wanderer,* Catholic weekly of St. Paul, Minnesota.)

In a word, the "liberal" Catholic is a phony Catholic, full of hypocrisy, puffed up with pride, irreligious and impious; his soul would appear to be an open book and his spiritual standing is just about zero. Let us all thank God, brothers, that we are not like these publicans and sinners.

Father Gillis in his syndicated column left it to his readers "to say whether they recognize any whom (his) description fits." Father Gillis' "liberal" is a timid, confused fellow, given to snobbery and religious indifferentism. He "can only with difficulty be distinguished from the non-Catholic. Whether that fact be helpful or detrimental to the spread of the Kingdom of God upon earth, the reader may form his own judgment."

In an ill-concealed attack on The Commonweal and *that* ilk, *Ave Maria* (which press has been circulating a pamphletized version of my article "What Is a Catholic?"—a "catechism" that reached eighty million potential readers all over the world through *Look* and the *Reader's Digest*) asks why the "liberals," meaning us, "have not equipped themselves to serve the Church at least as apostles capable on occasion of giving an intelligible and convincing account of the Faith that is in them." But *Ave Maria* really knows why: "To carry out any of the activities referred to one must possess competent knowledge, experience and strong Faith." We are "lacking in one or more of these needs." We "have not learned that Catholic enterprises are not improved by imitating the world, nor instituted and successfully carried on without great Faith, Hope, Charity and a large measure of self-sacrifice." Elsewhere in this little essay, the magazine describes us as "go-getters." "Liberals," it seems, are not only pusillanimous hypocrites; we are dollar-hungry, indolent Elmer Gantrys who don't even know the meaning of the cardinal virtues.

Another "liberal" Catholic, Professor Jerome Kerwin of the University of Chicago, who has probably brought more people into the Church and then led them to the religious life than any five of his critics and who has kept hundreds of born Catholics from going astray, was described in several Catholic papers (the Brooklyn *Tablet* and the *Florida Catholic,* among others) as coming from the "bottom of the barrel." He was branded as an "outsider" and was accused of "opposing," "undermining" and "discounting the religious and moral truths to which our (Catholic) schools are dedicated." Why? It seems that during a commencement address at the Catholic University of America Professor Kerwin had cautioned against certain types of "anti-Communism" and urged charity in dealing with those who were taken in by the Communists prior to 1948.

When the Democrats complained recently about their opponents branding them as traitors, they were promptly charged with being cry-babies. At the risk of having the same charge flung back at me, I think it is time to complain publicly about the treatment meted out to the "liberal" Catholic—by which is usually meant any Catholic who does not agree with the *Tablet,* Father Gillis, Senator McCarthy, *et al.*

"Liberal" Catholics have the ordinary claim on charity, and even if they didn't their children would. What do you think it is for a child to pick up a Catholic paper and read that his father is a crypto-heretic, a sower of dissension in the Catholic ranks, a spineless, virtue-less faker that the Church would be well rid of? When a priest-journalist brings his special authority to such judgments, all manner of confusion is sown. Moreover, what of the "liberal" Catholic's reputation among his fellow Catholics and the scandal given to non-Catholics by these facile anathemas?

This is no plea for the toleration of heresy or near-heresy. But it is a demand that if anybody insists on charging a fellow-Catholic with heresy he either put up or shut up. It is a demand that the business of applying motives and moral judgments which seem to be picked out of the partisan air be stopped. It is a request that political disagreements be kept political; that controversy be kept decently impersonal; and that a man's sins—even a "liberal" Catholic's sins—or his supposed sins, be kept as private as his confessions.

JOHN COGLEY.

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The Irony of Machado de Assis

AN UNBELIEVER REJECTING THE PRETENSIONS OF UNBELIEF MOCKED HIS OWN LACK OF FAITH

WILLIAM L. GROSSMAN

THE long, baffling delay in publication of English versions of the works of Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908) has ended. As an inevitable consequence, the shy Brazilian mulatto who achieved universality within the provincial confines of nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro is now recognized in the United States and in England as an ironist of classic proportions.

Beyond this broad recognition, however, the problem of locating Machado in the cross-trends of modern literary development has severely taxed the learning and insight of our book reviewers. They found in his *Epitaph of a Small Winner* (1881; English version 1952) resemblances to works by Blake, Cervantes, Compton-Burnett, France, Gogol, Hemingway, Huxley, Marquand, Montaigne, Montherlant, Pirandello, Poe, Proust, Sterne, Svevo, Voltaire, Waugh, and Whitman. The extreme diversity of these writers leads one to suspect that Machado's place in the history of ideas may not have been discovered at all.

Epitaph, more than any other of his works, presents a résumé of Machado's philosophy and spiritual attitude. It is the fictional autobiography, written after death, of an intelligent, wealthy, but otherwise undistinguished Everyman named Braz Cubas. In a lively, two-part counterpoint, the deceased Braz, detached and ironic, comments on the living Braz's efforts to get what he wants in sex, politics, writing, philosophy, and good works. And what he wants is simply to satisfy his appetites and his vanity—in brief, natural self-affirmation.

In the final chapter, Braz finds that the net balance of good and evil in his life would be zero were it not for "a small surplus, which provides the final negative of this chapter of negatives: I had no progeny, I transmitted to no one the legacy of our misery." And so the counterpoint ends on a note of unison—but not before the author has made clear his belief that this misery, which is a matter of undeniable experience, cannot be reconciled with the existence of a benevolent God.

Mr. Grossman is an associate professor at New York University. He translated "Epitaph of a Small Winner" (Noonday Press).

A novel in form only (and scarcely even in that), *Epitaph* thus presents modern man's spiritual dilemma: the inadequacy of the natural and the incredibility of the divine. The book—and, on a larger scale, Machado's ironic fiction in its entirety—traces this dilemma by means of a systematic critique of human aspiration, woven through a maze of seeming irrelevancies. The result is a philosophy in mosaic, coherent despite its apparently haphazard presentation.

MACHADO'S immediate philosophical point of departure, almost inevitable in his Francophile environment, was Comte, but the roots of his critique go back at least to Pascal. *Epitaph,* even apart from its direct references to Pascal, evidences again and again the influence of the *Pensées.* Machado's position, like Pascal's, can be understood only against the background of the struggle among three levels of existence for recognition and acceptance: the religious, the humanistic, and the naturalistic. To Pascal and all other Christians in the Pauline-Augustinian tradition, the second and third levels were virtually identical. As a consequence, the essential problem was formulated as the dualism of God and godless man. "There is nothing on earth," said Pascal, "that does not show either the wretchedness of man, or the mercy of God; either the weakness of man without God, or the strength of man with God."

Nevertheless, with the increasing secularization of European thought, the humanistic middle ground became established as an alternative. Moreover, the naturalistic level, previously scorned, came to enjoy a respectability which it can hardly be said to have relinquished even today, in spite of the vigorous attacks by humanists like Irving Babbitt and by clergy of virtually every sect.

Rousseau, clearly the most influential French writer between Pascal and Comte, recognized a level of distinctively human, civilized behavior, but rejected it in favor of natural man, whom he somehow conceived as benevolent. Comte recognized a higher and a lower nature in man and, having already found the divine

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(in the Christian sense) unacceptable, resolved the trilemma in favor of man's higher nature. It is still, as in Rousseau, man without God yet supposedly endowed with altruism. What Machado did in his novels and short stories was to observe this man in all his characteristic activities, including those that passed for altruistic. Finding none that rose above natural self-affirmation, Machado in effect reduced the Comtian trilemma to a dilemma based upon Pascal's dualism of natural man and man with God. His work may be conceived in essence as a return to a Christian statement of man's problem—a curious achievement for an unbeliever.

In idealizing human nature, Comte could not rest his case upon the nature, obviously inadequate, of individual men. Instead, he idealized collective man, represented by the family, the state, and ultimately by Humanity.

To Machado, this notion that men collectively could be superior to men individually—the root concept of totalitarianism—was just plain funny. In his short fantasy, *The Academies of Siam,* every member of the official academy privately informed the king's mistress that each of the other members was a (stupid) camel; yet in harmony the academicians chanted their "old hymn: 'Glory be to us, who are the rice of science and the Light of the World!' The eyes of the fair Kinnara were round with wonder. She could not understand how fourteen men together could be the Light of the World when each of them separately was a camel."

By the time of Machado's literary maturity, Comte had become accepted in Brazil as a prophet. Anatole France once told an audience in Rio de Janeiro that Comte's philosophy had taken firmer root in Brazil than in France itself. An attack on the Comtian idealization of godless man therefore had to overcome a strong burden of proof.

Machado's attack took the form of a detailed examination of human behavior and motives, culminating logically (although not chronologically) in a burlesque philosophy, Humanitism, expounded in *Epitaph* by the character Quincas Borba. The deadpan eloquence and academic division into "phases" with which Machado presents this philosophy, misled at least one American critic to suppose that it represented Machado's own beliefs, a mistake that the critic probably would not have made if he had had an opportunity to read some of Machado's other works.

Quincas Borba's philosophy is a rhetorical shrine to anthropocentrism or, better, to pananthropism. Humanity, according to Quincas, is "the basic principle of everything . . . the absolute creative substance." Hence all human activity is good. Nothing can be condemned but weakness, for it is a partial denial of Humanity. Quincas considers man worthy even of worship. "Humanity," he says, "must be also a religion, the religion of the future, the only true religion"; all other religions "are tainted by vulgarity or weakness."

On its face, we have here a satire on Comte's "religion of Humanity." Comte had gone so far in his idealization of godless man as to maintain that Humanity is the key to the universe and the only true object of worship. Unbeliever Machado, however, like devout Pascal, had discovered that man without God is a brute. Quincas, who accepted the Comtian denial of God, quite correctly made Humanity acquisitive, appetitive, and self-affirming—in short, made it *natural.*

Meticulously logical and profoundly perceptive in matters of the spirit, Machado saw that the theofugal road, whether via Rousseau, Comte, or a misinterpretation of Darwin, led to the natural affirmation of power and therefore of strife. It was leading, of course, through Nietzsche to Hitler *et al.* Humanitism pointed this direction. For example, Quincas Borba found symbolic grandeur in the spectacle of dogs fighting for a bone. His basic advice to his disciple Braz Cubas was: "Be strong! Fight! Conquer! Shine! Influence! Dominate!" "Christianity," he said, "is good for only women and beggars." "Buddha's nirvana is a heaven for paralytics." And so on.

Machado wrote this satire before Nietzsche became a vogue, indeed before his major works were published. It was a proffered ounce of prevention. However, both in itself and as part of Machado's general axiological critique, it ran and still runs counter to the tendency of which Ortega y Gasset has given us the classic analysis. Massman finds a spokesman in Quincas Borba, not in Machado. When he looks for a philosophy, he, like Braz Cubas, will be satisfied only by a massman philosophy, i.e., one that dignifies and encourages his continual quest for natural self-affirmation—a quest which inevitably drives him back to the mass level.

In a recent first-person novel by Gustavo Corçao, a Brazilian writer strongly influenced by Machado, the fictional author comments upon his cook's participation in the annual *carnaval*: "Jandira, like the rest of us, must . . . flee from nothingness. She must feel that she exists. And for this there is nothing better than to become part of the mass. . . ."

Here is the paradox of an individualism divorced from the divine: the person who seeks, like Jandira, to "feel that he exists"—or, like Braz Cubas, to stand out from the crowd—will, without divine guidance, inevitably find himself, as a result of the effort, more

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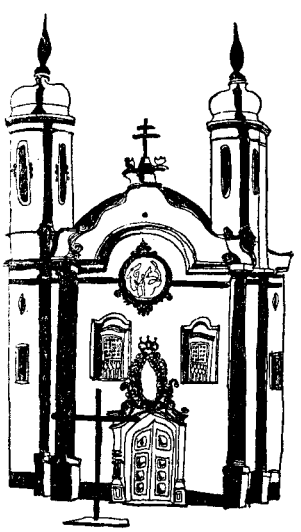
than ever a part of the mass. Braz Cubas, whose goal was self-affirmation, ended up, it will be remembered, in a chapter of negatives.

I HAVE referred to Machado's study of human behavior and motives, the result of which was a realistic picture of man without God and the consequent implied rejection of a humanistic middle ground. In "The Alienist," perhaps the most outspoken of his short stories, Machado gives a highly conscientious psychiatrist the duty to incarcerate the abnormal members of a municipality, i.e., those who fail substantially to conform to the common norms of human conduct. As the whole community, upon careful examination, is found to consist of cheaters, liars, etc., everyone in it (except the psychiatrist) is put away. The psychiatrist then concludes, with wholly democratic logic, that by weight of number the real norm must be that which he had previously conceived as abnormal. Freeing all the natural men—in other words, the entire community—he proceeds to incarcerate himself, the true human, i.e., the virtually nonexistent. (Cf. Pascal, *Pensées*: "Men are so necessarily mad, that not to be mad would amount to another form of madness.")

In general, when the characters in his ironic stories (no consideration is here given to Machado's romantic pot-boilers) appear benevolent, it is not because of humanistic self-discipline but because of naturalistic self-affirmation. The benevolence is therefore sham. Machado reveals its true nature with an almost clinical psychological insight that one hardly expects in fiction prior to the popularization of psychiatric concepts.

In "Testamentary Provision," a short story, Nocalao's will provides that his coffin be made by an obscure, penurious artisan, whom the deceased never met but whom the will describes as a great artist and one of the most honorable men in the land. The apparent desire to bring happiness to this poor fellow is somewhat tainted by motives implied in Nicoláo's personal history, which was one of constant jealousy—jealousy of the handsome, the politically renowned, the successful in professional life, etc. In his fatal illness he rejected medicine prescribed by famous doctors until, by a ruse, they were given him as prescriptions by a doctor of poor reputation. Apparently Nicoláo identified himself with the humble, and his efforts to increase their self-respect were merely efforts to increase his own.



Machado was too careful an observer, however, to suppose man wholly incapabile of selflessness. His fiction contains rare cases of benevolence which the author apparently accepts as genuine. But they have about them an otherworldliness, almost an irrelevance to reality. At best, Machado's society rewards altruism with ingratitude; at worst, it exploits it to the worldly detriment of the altruist.

Machado found himself trapped. Experience and observation not only required him to reject the natural world, but also, because he considered its evil inconsistent with omnipotent benevolence, made it impossible for him to recognize the divine.

In *Epitaph* the contemplation of human misery, and even of the struggle between an ant and a fly, leads him to reject the good news of Christianity. It is Quincas Borba, not Machado, who asserts (although not on religious grounds) ". . . . the calumniated Pangloss, was not so great a fool as Voltaire thought."

As for Machado*, he finds in the monotonous march of individuals toward oblivion "a spectacle whose purpose is to divert the planet Saturn, which would otherwise, I suppose, be utterly bored." There is even a jibe at the special optimism of Christian Science. One wonders how much Machado knew about *Science and Health,* which had been published four or five years earlier, when he paraphrased Quincas Borba: "According to Humanitism, pain is pure illusion. When the child is threatened with corporeal punishment, it shuts its eyes and trembles even before it is actually struck; this *predisposition* to pain creates an illusion. . . ."

At the same time, Machado saw that an attempt to idealize natural self-affirmation must be either a symptom of, or a step towards, the psychopathic. Quincas Borba, who made the attempt, became hopelessly insane—a course taken also, a few years later, by his successor Nietzsche. And so Machado found himself unable to resolve the dilemma.

The question was no longer which to accept, the natural or the divine. He found the former odious and the latter incredible; he could accept neither. The result was a terrible homelessness, a frustration and impotent rage, expressed again and again in his writing and, quite possibly, in his epilepsy. Psychiatrists tell us that at least some types of epileptic attack represent rage turned inward.

MACHADO had to seek asylum somewhere, and he did so not only in his irony but also in con-

*It is assumed that the pessimistic opinions of the deceased Braz Cubas are those of Machado himself. This assumption rests partly upon indications in Machado's other works and partly upon statements by Machado recorded in biographies of him.

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jugal love. The last of his novels, written after his wife's death, includes a tender portrait of a devoted, middle-aged couple, supposedly modeled on Machado's own domestic life. We have seen also that an unworldly altruism crops up occasionally in his fiction. Machado never generalized selfless love into a divine principle, yet in his experience and occasional literary recognition of it, one may find at least the germ of a solution towards which he groped.

Machado's failure to achieve a religious solution resulted primarily from his inability to surmount the Problem of Evil, but it was doubtless abetted by his hatred of the hypocrisy and superficiality that he observed in churchgoers. In a dialogue in rhymed couplets (*Before Mass*), a lady, on her way to church, calls on a friend, with whom she chats fashionably and maliciously about clothes, flirtations, a marital separation, etc.; and on she trips, to commune with God. In the short story "Between Saints," a miser whose wife is dying comes to church for the purpose of promising an expensive gift in exchange for a saint's intervention; but, remembering the ascetic counsel that prayers are worth more than worldly goods, he promises, instead, one thousand paternosters and Ave Marias.

Machado never found his way out of the dilemma, but he did perform for his countrymen, and perhaps for us, two invaluable services that cleared the way to a religious solution: destruction of the only alternative, and identification of the remaining obstacles. Machado ferreted out and exposed protean naturalism in its many human guises; thus, on empirical grounds, his works imply categorical rejection of the world of man without God. This left one horn to the dilemma and, preventing its acceptance, the apparent inconsistency between benevolent omnipotence and the prevalence of misery.

The Problem of Evil is still the critical man's stumbling block, and yet critical men have overcome it. One who did so, and whose road strangely parallels Machado's up to a point, is T. S. Eliot. Machado's reduction of the trilemma to a dilemma has a counterpart in T. S. Eliot's rejection of Irving Babbitt's humanistic solution of that trilemma. The humanistic level, to Babbitt, was one of self-discipline and application of the law of the mean. Mr. Eliot rejected the solution on the ground that "this humanistic point of view is auxiliary to and dependent upon the religious point of view." In other words, the genuinely superior in man is basically religious. Machado had already shown that the merely human is basically naturalistic. Between them, Machado and Mr. Eliot appear to have quite eliminated the middle ground.

WHAT, in brief, did Machado de Assis achieve? With expert observation and adult wit he presented the human comedy, the ironic story of man relying on the unreliable and conspiring with nature to defeat himself.

Standing historically at the point at which Rousseauistic nature-worship, Comtian man-worship, and pseudo-Darwinism converged into a broad secularism and power-worship—still today the mainstream of popular thought—Machado, virtually alone among laymen in his part of the world, saw and expressed the absurdities behind the trend. He did this in perhaps the only way in which it was possible to attract more than a nominal audience—through fiction and without preachment.

The indirect approach happily suited Machado's shy temperament and satirical talent. But the substance was still rejection of the mundane and therefore of almost everything his readers held dear. This rejection, by an unbeliever, of unbelief's sole refuge, simply because the facts, to a man of discernment, require rejection, this self-condemnation to hopelessness in preference to acceptance of worldly sham and degradation, reveals an ascetic spiritual integrity so profound that one is tempted to attribute it to divine guidance. Thus, ironically, Machado's irony challenges his own unbelief.

FROM BRITAIN

England and the Randall Report

Cardiff

WE Britons like the Randall Commission's report on foreign economic policy about as well as castor oil. But we have to admit that, like castor oil, it starts things moving. Surprisingly so, in a way, since it says merely what economists and administrators who knew something of the history behind it had expected all along. For twenty-five years, since tariffs reached their 1930 peak, the American market has been slowly re-opening. We hoped to see the Randall Commission push the door a little wider, under the banner of trade not aid. If Republicanism made that impossible, we hoped at least that there would be no backsliding. But we did not expect the walls of Jericho to collapse dramatically before the trumpets of European trade. And in fact the Commission has given us all that we hoped for, and more.

But by "we" I mean people who have been following these things fairly closely. There were some surprising illusions elsewhere. Now these are destroyed. The American market is not going to be thrown wide open, and American subsidies will stop. And that seems at

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long last to have brought home to quite a number of people that it is time to get moving with plans to save Europe by Europe's own efforts.

I for one am particularly grateful for the proposal to stop subsidies, at least as it applies to a country like Britain. The proposal to keep grants to underdeveloped countries down to existing Technical Assistance levels is another matter. But in already-developed Western Europe American grants have served their purpose. They have primed the pump and put us in a position to stand again on our own feet. And now, more and more, we are becoming conscious of the negative side of the operation; that curious combination of dependence and ill-will which it has produced among us.

I feel it myself. I do not think that I suffer from those delusions about coca-colonization or healthy young American barbarism about which Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn has written in The Commonweal. But when I wanted to finance a fairly expensive research project on European Christian social movements I made the grand tour of Europe before finally getting a grant from—your first guess is correct—Rockefeller. I deal also with another research field, that of social and psychological factors in productivity. British funds for work in that field have lately been increased. Are you surprised to hear that the ultimate source of that increase was the Mutual Security Administration? The branch of the European Movement for which I work in my off-moments is wholly financed from America. Over and over again, for purposes such as these, of great and general value to Europe, it is American purses that are open and American generosity that comes to the rescue. And we appreciate that generosity. Only every now and then one wants to scream. . . . And that is why I think that, while the Randall Report should save you a lot of money, it may well save our souls.

There may still be the odd piece of pump-priming to be done, even in Europe. Far be it from me to stop Ford's or Rockefeller's world-wide efforts to stimulate new lines of research. And—though this is strictly your business—nothing I have said implies admiration for the Randall Commission's recommendations for the readjustments which their proposals must involve in the United States itself. These readjustments are a matter of simple arithmetic. Excluding forms of aid which it is hoped will end, Western Europe has a two to three billion dollar balance of payments deficit. If this is not to be covered by grants and military expenditure, it must be covered either by selling more in America, which means cutting into the markets of a wide range of American consumer goods industries, or else by buying fewer dollar goods. That also would touch American industry. It would mean Belgians buying Volkswagens instead of Pontiacs, and Turks buying their machine tools in Coventry instead of Cincinnati. But, seeing what Europe chiefly buys from America, it must mean above all British people smoking Turkish or Rhodesian tobacco instead of Virginian, buying corn from Southern Europe instead of the Middle West, and weaving North Wales rayon instead of cotton from Alabama.

Judging by our experience, it is a lot easier to re-employ displaced industrial workers than to sort out a depressed farming area. That might point to letting more European industrial products into America, instead of encouraging Europe to keep more American farm products out.

HOWEVER, that is your problem. Ours is to decide how in fact to go about standing on our own feet. One week after the publication of the Randall Report, there met at Westminster an unofficial economic conference, called by the European Movement, with representatives from all over Western Europe and from several countries of the British Commonwealth and French Union. The idea, even before the Randall Report came out, was not merely to draft an economic policy for the whole area of Europe and its associated territories overseas, but to lead up to a further conference with American economists and business men later in the year. As it turned out, the Report set the keynote for the whole discussion.

What Europe asks for, as reflected in this unofficial but authoritative gathering, can be summed up in three points:

1) Freer trade in Europe and between Europe and the associated territories overseas, while maintaining the existing (not, please note, any higher) barriers against dollar imports.
2) An investment policy on the lines of the Council of Europe's 1952 Strasbourg Plan, to develop both Europe (especially the underdeveloped South-Eastern countries) and its associated territories, dependent and independent alike.
3) A drive for higher productivity in Europe and the associated territories, through better human relations in industry as well as through higher investment, with special efforts to re-employ workers thrown out of work by consequent changes in the structure of industry.

These resolutions are not new. Only this time I had the impression of greater urgency, and especially of more far-sighted urgency. Europe responded to the first Marshall Plan because it was scared of collapse tomorrow. The achievement of American aid is precisely that it is now possible to look further and more calmly ahead.

The Westminster resolutions are also sound enough, so far as they go, and do not seem to cut across the line taken by the Randall Commission. Indeed, they had better not. The first of the three proposals cannot legally

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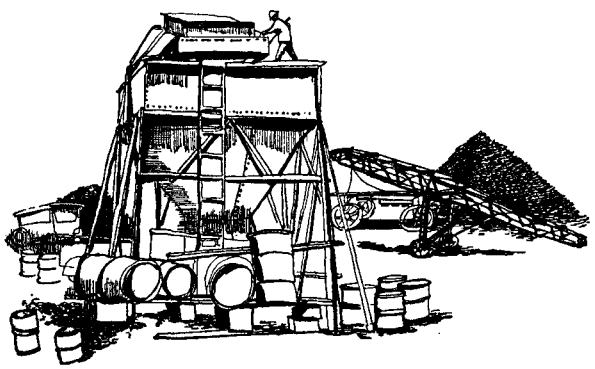
be carried out without the consent of a majority of the countries bound by the Geneva Agreement of Tariffs and Trade. That might be obtained without United States consent; and again it might not. Either way, and irrespective of GATT, it is clear that neither the trade nor the development proposals could get far without American tolerance, if not support. Will it then be enough, if and when Europe and the Commonwealth appear on America's doorstep with proposals on these lines, to send the convalescent out into the world with a last benevolent pat on the back?

Alas, no. There is a whole string of questions which I hope American representatives at any future conference will press rather hard. Notice first—I wish I had space to show this in detail—how cautious the resolutions are. "Modesty" was a word much favored in the section of the Westminster Conference—that on investments—in which I sat. Modesty may be justified. It is not necessarily easier or quicker to double European savings and investments than to halve American tariffs. But I could not help being reminded of the parable of



the man who, before he starts a house, would do well to see that he has enough money to finish it. For it may as well be said bluntly. The Westminster proposals are admirable in outline. But quantitatively they are mere fiddling compared to the size of the problems.

Secondly, too many—not all—of those who drafted these recommendations think in global terms, and forget the individuals and families behind them. They are not hard-hearted. They do not for instance ignore the problem of unemployment. But they think in terms of mechanisms—a *mechanism* for putting men in jobs, for instance—not of people. Migration of workers in search of jobs, for example, means for them so many seats in trains, so many free visas, such-and-such machinery for reporting jobs available in other countries. It does not mean the problem of an Irish lad on a Birmingham street corner. They talk innocently (that is not a sneer but a statement of fact) of "exploiting" colonies; the Chairman has to remind them that a word to which no one objects when applied to the natural resources of Europe itself might be more tactfully replaced with "develop" in Africa. Savings are for them something that happens largely among the rich, and depends on such things as taxation and inflation, not something that depends on an ordinary family's way of life.

There is a figure which keeps running through my head on this. It is sometimes said that Britain ought to be finding around three hundred and fifty million pounds a year for world development. That is forty cigarettes and a cinema ticket per British household per week. How does one persuade a family to save that much, week by week? Does one begin with the budget? Or with youth movements, and family movements, and marriage guidance, and perhaps a housing association or a consumers' co-op?

There is also still much confusion over the results which different sorts of development will yield. A welcome feature of the Westminster Conference was the new accent on building up such countries as Greece, or Turkey, or Southern Italy; or, some tentatively added, Spain. But there are still, especially among Empire-building British Conservatives, many who cannot see that the economic gain from developing these countries is far more certain, and probably quicker, than anything to be looked for in, say, Africa.

There is a social duty to develop Africa, and there should be some economic gain in it. But Italy, Greece, or even Turkey are advanced countries, with their own technicians, and their own native and (moderately) stable governments, which can afford to (and do) offer a fair deal to the incoming investor. There, not in Africa or Southeast Asia, is where one would expect a quick contribution to bridging the dollar gap. Development in the Dominions, of course, has as good prospects as can be found anywhere in Southern Europe. But there is a chance of establishing a full free trade area in Europe, and a development authority with real executive powers. And that, unfortunately, in spite of the Colombo Plan and the Commonwealth Conferences, is more than one can say for Britain and the Dominions.

THIS report is less encouraging than that which I gave a short time ago on the Second Congress of Europe at The Hague. The Hague Conference was of the Six, who in some spheres have and in others hope to have a common government and executive power. One could feel the current of reality and responsibility. At Westminster, with Britain, Scandinavia, and the Commonwealth present, everything was more tentative. The debates would often have lacked reality had it not been for the Randall Commission's reminder. "Is it a progress or a first-class funeral?" a Dutch delegate asked me at the end. That, I suspect, depends a good deal on what questions Americans ask when the emissaries briefed at Westminster eventually reach your shores.

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY.

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THE STAGE

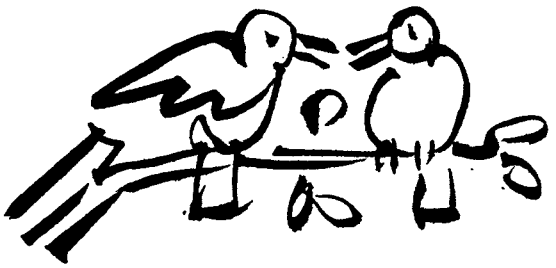
THE CAINE MUTINY COURT MARTIAL

MR. Herman Wouk's celebrated fiction of the wartime Navy, *The Caine Mutiny,* has been shaped by that novelist into a lean and muscular play, a triumphant assertion of the masculine principle, intrepid in its dialectical techniques as it is vulnerable in its fundamental insights. Mr. Wouk has brought off this masterly task of compression largely, I should suppose, by the excision of everything superfluous in his novel (which I have not read). Mr Wouk has lost some expository fullness in refashioning his novel, but he has gained vastly in economy.

It is lamentable, in view of the moral and intellectual refinement Mr. Wouk has brought to the trial sequence proper, that he has seen fit to append the notorious epilogue, with its indefensible abrogation of the values we have previously been led to accept. His thesis (which appears to have exercised the ethical sensibilities of a large part of the American public) posits the pristine virtue of Queeg, whatever his psychopathic eccentricities: he was the commando of democratic society, the man who launched the lifeboats; and it is the bland countenance of a slippery sitting-duck, the "intellectual" Keefer, which must be smeared with guilt. Mr. Wouk cannot, of course, bring off so drastic an inversion without severe internal damage to logic and sentiment, and his last scene consequently dissipates much of the foregoing power and integrity. Yet the very fact that he should have ruptured the texture of his work to enjoin so irrational a surrender to a mindless mystique of discipline is, in itself, symptomatic, and appalling.

My own objection rests on a simpler aesthetic premise: namely, that Mr. Wouk muddies the quality of his experience by defining it, at the last, in terms of innocence and guilt. Queeg's disintegration on the witness stand has a small but authentic tragic force: the tragedy is one of private incapacity in public responsibility. To watch this man sloughing off those protective husks of dignity, custom and reputation through which we exist in society, and exposing the nameless terrors and anxieties which divide his soul, invites the supreme tribute, that of tears. But Mr. Wouk has inexplicably chosen to sacrifice the intimate truth and rigorous compassion of these scenes for the poor triumph of a vulgar ideological *frisson.*

Yet so very much remains: indeed, whatever objections we propose may be traced to resentment that anything should have been permitted to cripple so handsome and athletic a play, an experience so dramatically, humanly, morally involving.



Spring is now well advanced—

whatever it looks like out of the window. These are the latest books to appear:

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by Dom Hans Urs von Balthasar

The first book on St. Therese from a theologian's point of view. The author finds her teaching immensely important, the saint herself all the more attractive for being a little less perfect than we had supposed. We announced this book last Fall, but it was held up in production and is only now ready. $3.50

BEFORE THE DAWN

by Eugenio Zolli

Don't forget this apologia by the former Chief Rabbi of Rome, which is now just published. $3.25

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Lloyd Nolan's playing of Queeg is the most distinguished work an American actor has done in longer than one would care to recall. It shows restraint and controlling intelligence, and an ability to achieve subtle, all but imperceptible transitions and graduations. It would be difficult to imagine the season producing a performance of comparable emotional power.

Henry Fonda as the attorney Greenwald plays in a subdued key; we may think at first that his melancholy, like Hamlet's, is a little in excess of the circumstances. Yet the balance and delicacy with which he controls the second act are thoroughly admirable. His ability to suggest passion held in check, his complex, troubled integrity, are here beautifully displayed. Mr. Fonda is one of our few male actors who have visibly, spiritually, matured: time has left its record in the contours of his fine American face. John Hodiak's Maryk, and all the smaller roles, down to the anonymous Naval judges, are sharp, incisive characterizations.

It is Charles Laughton as director, again in collaboration with Producer Paul Gregory, who has deployed brilliantly the life latent in Mr. Wouk's play. Mr. Laughton is, in the fullest and most honorable sense, a man of the theater: he has abolished all our fragile contemporary illusions of theater as decor, theater as mood, theater as sociology or psychology, and restored to us the thing itself, the necessary angel. His influence on our stage could be strong and salutary. Can he not be induced to abandon the celluloid jungle, and the rigors of drafty one-night stands in mining towns to settle permanently among us? (*At the Plymouth.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

KEEP IT MOVING, BOYS

IF you can accept a preposterous plot and like extravagant melodrama, "Hell and High Water" may very well be your meat. The surprising thing about the picture is that CinemaScope, which offers some stunning wide-screen views of Paris, Vienna, Tokyo and elsewhere at the film's start, also works out very well when confined to the interior of a submarine. The highly unlikely story that finally lands us in the remote waters of the North Pacific concerns a group of people in a submarine (commissioned by some international scientists and former statesmen—all acting as private individuals) who are sent to check up on radioactive monkey business on an island way up in the Arctic. This proves quite a trip—what with Richard Widmark

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as the captain of the husky crew and newcomer Bella Darvi as the only woman aboard. Director Samuel Fuller, who also had a hand in the script, has practically every sequence fraught with danger—not only because of the Reds, who turn out to be the real menace, but also because of the presence of this woman scientist characterized as a genius with a body by Fisher. Tough Captain Widmark turns out to have a heart of gold beneath his hairy chest. He is assisted by Cameron Mitchell, Gene Evans, David Wayne (in much too small a role for such a fine actor) and various other manly fellows who are willing to give their all for almost any vague cause. There's never a dull, or very thoughtful, moment on CinemaScope's expansive screen.

THE same cannot be said of "The Command," another film made in colorful CinemaScope—and one for which I had high hopes. "The Command" is a western with plenty of beautiful scenery in Wyoming Territory, Cavalry in blues and yelping Indians. But scenery and fancy equestrian maneuvers are not enough to make a movie. Director David Butler tried to substitute action for plot, but even the action, which stems from a novel by James Warner Bellah, doesn't whip up much interest. The story, about a medical officer who finds himself in command of a cavalry troop and then some infantry and a civilian wagon train, fails to develop the character of this man on whom so much depends. He's played handsomely enough by Guy Madison, but the character is all on the surface. James Whitmore manages to get a little more depth into the role of the sergeant; however, Joan Weldon and the others involved are little more than figures.

THERE are a couple of minor English efforts on our screens now that are worth investigation. "Both Sides of the Law" tells a story of policewomen in London and the routine cases that have to be handled by the Chelsea Police Station. Director Muriel Box, who also had a hand in writing the script, does a very good job in making all these tags of plots jell into a whole. Anne Crawford and Rosamund John are excellent as a couple of women of the law.

"The Horse's Mouth" is about a reporter on a holiday on a remote island off the Irish coast. He discovers that the storekeeper there consults an Oracle who lives at the bottom of a well. Director Pennington Richards chose to handle his large cast in a half-serious-half-humorous vein. The spoof runs a little too long, but it's lots of fun and certainly something off the beaten track.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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COMMUNICATIONS

"THE DANGERS OF AWARENESS"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Noting with interest your editorial on "The Dangers of Awareness" [January 29, 1954], I re-read the statement issued by "Aware," of which that great gentleman and great American, Godfrey Schmidt, is president, and, for the life of me, I can't quite understand what you are so troubled about.

What is so wrong about good Americans in the entertainment industry banding together in the year 1954, when Communists are our deadly enemies, to combat the Red infiltration of the industry? Haven't you read of the situation in the Television Writers of America, where the executive secretary, who had made use of the Fifth Amendment, was retained? Aren't you at all familiar with the Hollywood situation, now fortunately cleared up for the most part, where the Communists were able to obtain nearly four million dollars from so-called liberal fronters? In short, don't you know what's going on?

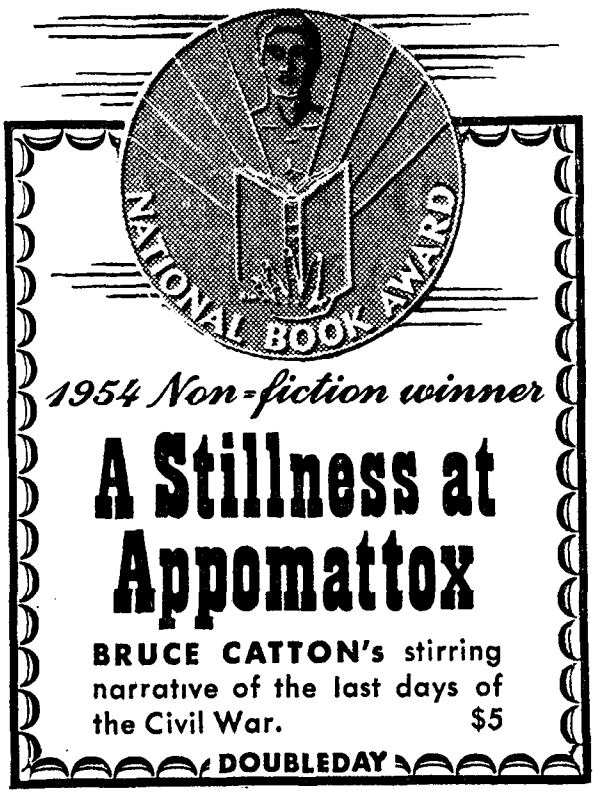
What amazes me about your editorial is that you are critical of a pro-American outfit, not on the basis of what it has done, but on the basis of what you think it might do. Talk about "guilt by association"! This is "guilt in advance"!

VICTOR LASKY.

"EDUCATION AND CHRISTIAN CULTURE"

Budleigh Salterton, Devon, England

TO the Editors: I have read Mr. Mullaney's letter in your issue of January 15 with much interest and a considerable measure of agreement. Certainly it is impossible to study Christian culture without prior knowledge of its Graeco-Roman background. The questions at issue are largely ones of method and emphasis: where we shall place the center of our field of study and how the limited time and intellectual resources at our disposal can be used to the best advantage. My criticism of the traditional humanist education is that it concentrated so exclusively on the study of classical Greek and Roman culture that it practically ignored the existence of that Christian culture which is the direct source of our own. But if we wish to study the latter with the same scholarship and care with which the humanists studied antiquity, it is obvious that it will severely limit the time available for other studies. This is a serious enough problem for the modern educationalist in any case, for he is confronted with pressure of the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continual extension of the field of knowledge in the humanities, no less than in physical science, while at the same time he has to deal with students who have less leisure and less opportunity to devote themselves to an intensive study of their chosen field.

Personally I have nothing but admiration for the spirit of integration which is such a marked feature of modern American education especially when it is dominated by the idea of Christian culture, as is the case with the program of Manhattan College of which Mr. Mullaney writes. Nevertheless we must face the fact that the average student with four years at his disposal, and perhaps little preparation, cannot hope to cover the whole development of Western culture, political, literary, philosophical and artistic from the age of Homer to that of Hemingway except in the most summary and superficial way. An education which depends on summaries and surveys and digests is not a liberal education. That is why the educationalists of the past have chosen one of two alternatives: either a fundamental study of classical culture or an encyclopaedic study of contemporary culture.

What I am advocating is the introduction of the study of Christian culture as a third alternative, not only because it is the obvious basis of a Christian education, but also because it is the keystone in the arch of Western culture without which the cultures of classical antiquity and the modern Western world fall apart in two unrelated systems of thought and ways of life. Moreover I believe that it is possible to study Christian culture in its classical literary and artistic expression with the same accuracy and solidity of scholarship with which classical antiquity has been studied but for which our modern Western culture is not yet ripe. This has already been done in the modern university, so far as medieval studies are concerned. But hitherto, so far as I know, there has been no school or institute which has attempted to study Christian culture as a whole in all its three main phases—patristic, medieval and post-Renaissance, (or Byzantine, Gothic and Baroque). If this could be done I believe that it would widen the whole perspective of our education and throw new light on many features in Western culture which have not hitherto been sufficiently understood or appreciated.

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON.

"REVISING THE CODE"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I wish to offer the following observations relative to the editorial in The Commonweal [January 22] entitled, "Revising the Code."

The author of this editorial is correct on the point that the Ten Commandments afford no basis for the

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Books & Authors

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Code's provision against the depiction of miscegenation. That provision in the original draft of the Code was improperly and incorrectly written and as it stands it does not rightly state the situation to which it was intended to apply. For several years I have been seeking to have that provision changed. Up to the present time the Motion Picture Association has not acted on the recommendation.

The Code was not intended to provide a binding standard for "all people in all places at all times." Rather, it was intended to provide a reasonable, prudent standard for theatrical motion pictures, patronized by persons of all age and social groups. While the Code was in no sense intended to handicap but, rather, to help artistic effects, it was recognized that attainment of artistic effects does not justify a defiance of any applicable moral standard.

The Code does not provide that a murderer "must always get caught." The intention, rather, is to guard against the presentation of any crime or moral evil in a manner that tends to justify or inspire imitation.

Your writer is quite correct on the point that a primary intention of the Code is the avoidance of what, by the nature of things, would be a temptation to the average moviegoer. The average moviegoer represents the target area which any sensible code dealing with popular entertainment would have to aim for. An audience of mature theologians, obviously, would not represent a typical motion picture theatre audience.

The average moviegoer is precisely the same person he was twenty-four years ago with respect to his obligations to the moral law. The Code clearly distinguishes between matters of convention, fashion and taste, which change from time to time, as distinguished from matters of moral principle, which do not change. In the case of the former the regulations of the Code have been changed from time to time in the past and doubtlessly will be changed from time to time in the future. With respect to the moral principles underlying the essential purposes, these principles as expressed in the Code have not been changed and will not properly be subject to change, now or at any time in the future.

The Code was not written with only children in mind. The "Adults Only" sign has never proved a practicable arrangement. "More liberal use" of it would provide no solution. The theatre manager is in no position to make a sound judgment as to the moral and intellectual maturity level of prospective patrons. The "Adults Only" sign wherever used has largely failed in any worthy purpose but has, on the contrary, been often used, as your writer indicates, for reasons contrary to any worthy purpose.

Incidentally, out of all of the current agitation for altering the Code no specific proposal as to how it might be changed to better serve its basic purposes has come from any source. Unless and until such

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specific proposals are presented and approved the Code will continue unchanged in its essential character.

MARTIN QUIGLEY.

THE ROSENBERG CASE

Uniondale, N. Y.

TO the Editors: May I enter a few words concerning the Rosenberg Case. I have read Bishop Hunt's [December 18, 1953], Mr. Ballantyne's and Mrs. Bishop's [January 29, 1954] letters as well as all previous discussion in The Commonweal.

As one of those who felt the death sentence was too severe in the Rosenberg instance, I believe that the "error" in the United States with regard to these unfortunate people was on the side of mercy rather than justice. While Mr. Ballantyne raises an interesting point concerning the concept of an "enemy"—I would tend to agree with him that giving secrets to England and France would not be considered quite so serious, for rather obvious reasons—still I must bow to superior legal knowledge in this matter. I am not an attorney and I could not hope to examine the legal aspects of the case with competence. But the case was certainly reviewed by numerous jurists whose reputations are of the best, and at the risk of being called naive, I prefer to think that justice according to the laws of the land was satisfied as far as humanly possible.

This does not alter the fact that there was a strong lack of both mercy and Christian charity surrounding the case. Many newspapers treated the affair much in the way I gather purges are treated abroad. There was an "I'm glad they got it" attitude which seemed to smack of a paganism not fitted to a country which likes to call itself Christian

But all of this attitude fits in with a fear which has been most prevalent in the United States since the conclusion of World War II. Like the rich man who has so much to worry about that he builds a high wall around his acres, punctuated only by an iron gate and armed guards, we have suddenly found ourselves in a world which has been compressed — communications have reduced distances from weeks and days to hours and minutes— and at the center is the richest, most powerful, most envied nation in the world—the United States. We no longer look at the United States objectively. It is now a personal matter of great subjectivity. We are the rich man who has so much to lose in any disturbance. We have power which we half fear, half like. On every side we see instability and uncertainty, and never before have these things been so close to home. Always they have been remote. Peiping, Seoul, Formosa, New Delhi, Prague, Bucharest, Moscow, Siberia were vague names we ran across in geography books or spelling bees. They might as well have been mythical kingdoms or mountains on the Moon.

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In 1954 these names are terribly real. American boys have died fighting in fights which started in these strange places. And more Americans may die before stability returns to the world. It is not that we are afraid to die; rather it is because we do not know for sure why we are apt to die. It all seems so "useless." For years our schools and press and radio have been telling us that the wheelbase of an automobile or the thickness of the pile in the living room or the dues in the country club are the tests of a man's worth. There has been no room for the spiritual at the inn of American culture. The most successful alumnus is the richest —rich not in learning or in charity or in contribution to mankind, but rich in dollars and cents. This we have accepted as the norm.

World leadership requires something more intangible than money. We have poured millions of dollars into many lands and we are unable to understand why the ills of these lands did not disappear. Money always possessed magic before. And so our uncertainty is compounded and we are confounded still further.

The net result is a loss of mercy, loss of charity, loss of perspective. We are fighting sinners, not sins—but then for years we denied the existence of sin, and our relativists still preach that eternal truths do not exist. Until we realize that Communism is the enemy and that it can only be defeated by learning what causes it, we will continue to fight Communists without any concern for how they became Communists.

However, the charity which Mrs. Bishop points out on the parts of so many French Catholics where the Rosenbergs were concerned could also be turned toward the United States. Love and understanding are needed by all God's children, and particularly by those who may have sinned. If Europeans and all those outside our borders feel that the United States has been so wrong on the Rosenbergs, then may I humbly ask that they join me in asking God to give to the United States the grace and guidance it needs to assume the responsibility it finds thrust upon it in these trying days?

JAMES BERNARD KELLEY.

The exchange of letters on the Rosenberg Case followed the publication of a dispatch from France by Robert Barrat in our issue of August 14, 1953. On September 4, there was published a comment by Caroline Adams, followed on September 11 by a letter from Claire Huchet Bishop. The second phase of the controversy began with a letter from the Most Rev. Duane G. Hunt, Bishop of Salt Lake City, published on December 18. Murray Ballantyne and Mrs. Bishop commented on Bishop Hunt's letter on January 29, 1954. With the publication of Mr. Kelley's letter, we must now bring the controversy to a close. THE EDITORS.

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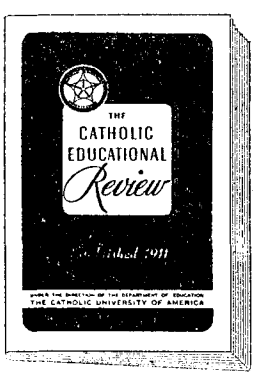

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CHURCH and Society—Catholic Social and Political Thought and Movements, 1789-1950. Edited by Joseph N. Moody. Arts, Inc. Publishers. $12. A monumental symposium by thirteen Catholic experts on all phases of modern Catholic social and political thought. The only thing of its kind in the English language. The section on Germany is extraordinarily good, but the chapter on the United States is somewhat less than adequate.

The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons. Two Volumes. By John T. Ellis. Bruce. $17.50. The biography of an era as well as a man. A perfect combination of objective scholarship and graceful literary style. Of particular interest to students of the Catholic social movement of the United States and indispensable for students of the contemporary Church-State controversy.

Between Community and Society: A Philosophy and Theology of the State. By Thomas Gilby. Longmans Green. $5.25. A brilliant reinterpretation of Thomistic political theory by a philosopher who frequently enough writes like a poet. Tough sledding at times, but well worth the effort.

The Manner Is Ordinary. By John LaFarge. Harcourt, Brace. $4.75. The autobiography of one of the most talented and most influential priests of our generation.

The Church Today. By Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard. Fides. $4.75. A collection of seven pastoral letters by the late Archbishop of Paris, who will probably go down in history as one of the very greatest spiritual leaders of twentieth century Europe.

The Quest For Community. By Robert A. Nisbet. Oxford University Press. $5. A study in the ethics of order and freedom. A masterful exposition of the philosophy of political pluralism by an non-Catholic sociologist deeply versed in the Catholic tradition. Very highly recommended.

The Conservative Mind. By Russel Kirk. Regnery. $6.50. Kirk, too, is deeply versed in the Catholic tradition, but there are certain elements or phases of that tradition which are not given adequate attention in this unusually lucid defense of the conservative mind. Kirk, in my opinion, underestimates the importance and necessity of aggressive Catholic social action as an integral part of the Christian tradition.

SISTER MARIELLA GABLE

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Stage of Fools. By Charles A. Brady. Dutton. $3.95. Historical novel which with fair respect for the records, restrained and beautiful writing, presents Saint Thomas More as most lovable.

The Mountain. By Henri Troyat. Simon and Schuster. $2.50. Stark, simple, moving story of a mountaineer and his scoundrel brother. Magnificent descriptions of mountain climbing combine with epic problems of character. In its tone and weight asks for comparison with Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea.*

The Sign of Jonas. By Thomas Merton. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50. A window without shutters (or shame) gives view with humor and the pleasant devices of journalism of a Trappist's reflections and problems.

ANNE FREMANTLE

MY favorite Catholic books of last year are:

Obedient Men. By Denis Meadows. Appleton - Century - Crofts. $3.50.

The Manner Is Ordinary. By John LaFarge. Harcourt, Brace. $4.75.

My Friends the Senses. By Charles-Damian Boulogne. Kenedy. $3.

The Choir of Muses. By Etienne Gilson. Sheed & Ward. $3.50.

Weeping Cross. By Henry Longan Stuart. Regnery. $4.

PAUL K. CUNEO

OF the books published in the past twelve months which I read, I especially recommend the following two novels and four works of non-fiction:

Stage of Fools. By Charles A. Brady. Dutton. $3.95. and *Weeping Cross. By Henry Longan Stuart. Regnery. $4.* These are, in my opinion, outstanding novels; each tells a story eminently worth telling in a manner that makes the reading of it a pleasure.

Bread in the Wilderness. By Thomas Merton. New Directions. $6. Frankly I was surprised to find that writing about the Psalms can be as readable and interesting.

Dead Man in the Silver Market. By Aubrey Menen. Scribners. $3. Half Indian, half Irish and raised as an Englishman, Mr. Menen has an unusual position from which to view the peculiarities of nationalism; his book about it is sharp, amusing, packed with good sense and good will, and a delight to read.

The Manner Is Ordinary. By John LaFarge. Harcourt, Brace. $4.75. This autobiography is of interest not only because of what it tells about the life and work of Father LaFarge, but almost equally because of the many fascinating people, some of them among the important names of the twentieth century, who are constantly entering the story.

The Catholic Church and the American Idea. By Theodore Maynard. Appleton-Century-Crofts. $3.50. Although not primarily intended as such, this book is a good one-volume history of the Church in America—and a readable one, at that.

JUSTUS GEORGE LAWLER

CHRISTIAN Ethics. By Dietrich von Hildebrand. McKay. $6. Dr. von Hildebrand's conception of moral philosophy depends basically not on pure reason, but on experience—a point of departure which will be applauded not only by disciples of Husserl, but by good Thomists as well. This work is significant because it affirms a necessary balance between the intrinsic relativism of the *Situationsethik* and the purely abstract moralism of much popular catechesis.

The New Tower of Babel. By Dietrich von Hildebrand. Kenedy, $3. Even a minor work of one who is—in my opinion—the outstanding religious philosopher of our time, deserves attention. These seven essays on the intellectual life reflect the new Christian appreciation of the *subject;* an appreciation which has accounted to a great extent for the revival of liturgical sense, and a piety which is not excessively limited by formal categories.

The World of Silence. By Max Picard. Regnery. $2.50. Max Picard, a poet of Plato's lineage, ranks with Martin Buber and Abraham Heschel as one of the great living Jewish philosophers. But as a philosopher he has come to an awareness of the Christian fact, hence his work is primarily concerned with that silence from which proceed not merely the authentic acts of man, but also the eternal Word of God.

Art Sacré au XX^e Siècle: By P.-R. Régamey. Cerf. $3.50. At the risk of being singular, I would like to include this non-English work. Père Régamey enters new *querelle des anciens* armed with theological wisdom and critical clarity of a very high order; but also hampered by a definite bias to the contemporary. This is a work which must be read for a fuller appreciation of the difficulties of a "modern" religious art.

The Church Today. By Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard. Fides. $4.50. What the *Imitation* of à Kempis was to the age of the *devotio moderna* the writings of Cardinal Suhard may well be to this present epoch in the growth of the Body of Christ. Cardinal Suhard and the men of the revival in France, while sometimes appearing to advance perhaps too hastily, never make the mistake of regarding classic theology as classification theology; hence their works breathe an understanding of the plight of modern man which cannot but prove fruitful.

JOHN COGLEY

A LIST like this must be very personal and is necessarily limited. One only reads so many books and inevitably misses some good ones. Why this book rather than that delighted one may be traced to such arbitrary things as a good dinner, a special interest, an expansive mood, or perhaps a personal experience which softened one's receptivity. Here, then, is my list.

The Manner Is Ordinary. By John LaFarge. Harcourt, Brace. $4.75.

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The autobiography of a distinguished American, soldierly Jesuit and impressively priestly priest. Father LaFarge, whose manner is indeed "ordinary" though his accomplishments are staggering, just by being himself throughout the book lends a new shine to the concepts of reasonableness, tolerance, good humor and patience—the lost virtues of our irrationable, intolerant, crabbed and anxious age.

Catholicism and the World Today. By Dom Aelred Graham. McKay. $3. Dom Aelred, Prior of Portsmouth, is another priest of reasonable manner and eirenic approach. A great number of people today have a distorted, ugly vision of the Catholic Church. It is a vision largely compounded of misunderstanding, half-truths and the belligerence of some thoughtless Catholics. People hate this vision not because of some shameful malevolence but just because the distorted image is truly ugly and hateful. Dom Aelred succeeds in showing the Church as it essentially *is*—the thing that keeps him, an urbane man of infinite good will, a believing Catholic and dutiful monk. The Catholicism that shines through his book demands faith, to be sure, but one who would turn from it would have to do so with some measure of regret.

The Range of Reason. By Jacques Maritain. Scribners. $3.50. Every year there is more reason for a whole generation, now two generations, of Catholics to be grateful to our Maritain. Men must have heroes and who is more worthy of our incense than the saintly scholar who has added a new dimension to our understanding of our religion and of the world we live in? This book of essays about many things—straight philosophy, political thought, cultural matters, human fellowship—is authentically Maritain, authentically philosophic, authentically Christian.

Between Community and Society. By Thomas Gilby. Longmans Green. $5.25. Father Gilby's impressive volume is concerned with the relationship between the Church and the civil power— a problem which has bedeviled Christian thinkers from the days of Constantine to our own. The Dominican author of *Between Community and Society* rescues the argument from the sterile formulas of the classroom and places it in its proper historical setting. His essential point seems to be that the relationship is of its nature dynamic. No theory can be frozen, for the simple reason that the nature of the State changes according to time and place and the Church must of necessity accommodate itself to the actual political order. An "ideal" relationship presupposes an "ideal" State.

Hadrian the Seventh. By Frederick Baron Corvo. Knopf. $3.50. Corvo's critics—and they were many and bitter and largely justified—might be turning in their graves to find his name on a "Catholic Books" list. But the "spoiled priest" who wrote this imaginative, highly baroque novel about an imaginary, highly baroque Pope (the projection of his own daydreams) can be considered only within a Catholic context. This reader, for one, is grateful that Mr. Knopf had the good sense to re-issue it forty years after the author's death. As D. H. Lawrence said: "This book remains a clear and definite book of our epoch, not to be swept aside. If it is the book of a demon, as Rolfe's contemporaries said, it is the book of a man demon, not a mere poseur. And if some of it is caviar, it at least came out of the belly of a live fish."

Monsignor George G. Higgins is assistant director of the Social Action department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Sister Mariella Gable, a well-known critic and anthologist, teaches at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. Her books include "Our Father's House," "They Are People," and "Many-Colored Fleece."

Anne Fremantle is a contributing editor of The Commonweal. Her most recent books are *Christian Conversation* and *A Treasury of Early Christianity*.

Paul K. Cuneo is the editor of *Books on Trial*, published by the Thomas More Association.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF JACQUES MARITAIN. By Charles A. Fecher. Newman. $5.

By JAMES V. MULLANEY

THIS is an exposition, by a non-philosopher for non-philosophers, of the philosophy of Maritain. It is symbolic of the wide appeal of Maritain that the full-length study of his thought has been undertaken by a young man who aspires to be a novelist. That the time had come for such a review might have seemed melancholy. But, with sly humor, Maritain published one of his greatest books, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry,* after this study was finished.

The book is divided into three parts: "The Man" (pp. 3-49), "The Philosopher" (pp. 53-320), "Conclusion" (pp. 323-346). The first part covers again some of the data contained in Mme. Maritain's books of memoirs. The second part, which is the body of the book, surveys in twenty-two chapters the teaching of Maritain on the philosophy of nature, logic, metaphysics with its various subdivisions, ethics, politics and economics, philosophy of society, of history, of culture, esthetics and the specifically religious dimension of Maritain's thought. The final part assesses Maritain's relations to Thomism. There is also a Bibliographical Note listing the books that have appeared in English, and an index.

It is not pleasant to criticize this substantial study. To countless young Catholics Maritain is *the* philosopher: they know that there is simply no voice like his. To cavil at this analysis of his thought seems like ingratitude. Again, one should not be inconsiderate of so young and so dedicated an author as Mr. Fecher. I cannot even conjecture how many months of hard study and of harder writing went into the making of this book.

It is only the author's attempt in his preface to forestall scholarly criticism that makes it possible to criticize. Mr. Fecher urges that he is not a scholar and that his book is not intended for scholars. But he ought to know that if he freely chooses to venture, unprepared, into such a field that he must take the consequences, one of which is a gentle mauling from the "pros." He ought to know, too, that books for the "average intelligent reader" require greater technical command of the data and greater communication skill than those for scholars. It is not the young pedant but the old master who can give vitality to the abstruse in the "average intelligent reader." Isn't Maritain himself an example?

There are three areas in which I object to Mr. Fecher's presentation. First, his treatment of Maritain is mechanical. All of Maritain's English titles are treated as equally important. Now, in dealing with Maritain's thought it is essential to be selective. Some books, such as the *Introduction to Logic,* need not be read now because other logicians have done a much better job in the same field. Other books, such as *The Degrees of Knowledge* and *Science and Wisdom,* should not be read in the present English translation because of the translations' defectiveness. Others, such as *Art and Scholasticism* and probably all of the political writings prior to *Man and the State* are outdated by later developments in Maritain's thought. Finally, in the polemical books, or in polemical sections of certain books, Maritain was (long ago) unkind, unjust and—the most cutting, but the most necessary, criticism—*unphilosophical* in his handling of non-Thomists. The future, I suspect, will be kinder to Maritain than the present because it will have the good sense to forget all but a handful of his really great works, beginning about his fiftieth year.

Second, Mr. Fecher has located wrongly the central significance of Maritain. What is compelling about him is *not* his Thomism, but his capacity for constant intellectual growth. It is this capacity which brought him out of scientism into

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Bergsonism, out of Bergsonism into Thomism, out of a party-line Thomism into philosophy which, without renouncing Thomism, is yet open to every vestige of truth. The most recent books of Maritain are also the most authentically philosophical and the least doctrinaire. As his body grows older, his mind grows younger, more selectively open. His intellectual development between fifty and seventy-one (his present age) is more marked than that of any corresponding period of his life. For a body to grow younger would be monstrous, but for a mind to grow younger is, I should suppose, but a natural predisposition for its eternal childhood before the Face of its Father.

Third, Mr. Fecher has represented M. Maritain's changed attitude to non-Thomists, such as Bergson, as due to the mellowing which is alleged to come with advancing years. This is intolerable. The change was intellectual, not glandular, and it had an intellectual cause. That cause was a new conception of Thomism. The conception of Thomism found in men like Father M. C. D'Arcy, S. J., Yves Simon or James Collins is much more genuine than the strident Thomism of Maritain's earlier years. (Incidentally, Mr. Fecher does not mention Collins at all in his list of Thomists, and dismisses Father D'Arcy as not first rate, but deserving of honorable mention. This appalling condescension could be excused only by virtue of a really profound ignorance of D'Arcy.) Sometime around the age of fifty, or perhaps some years later than that, Maritain became urbane, at ease with the burden of his Thomism. He learned that, as he himself put it in 1943: "The students in philosophy owe it to their teacher to free themselves from him." In that sentence let Maritain be the student, and Aquinas the teacher, and the point is clear. Maritain learned that Thomism is the friend, but not the tyrant, of the responsible reason; that, having assimilated Thomism, one must then, relying on this inner strength, do his own thinking. He learned that, having been a Thomist, one must become a philosopher

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without renouncing the Thomism. It is this later Maritain who is the permanent Maritain.

Maritain has very often been the object of unjust and even despicable criticism. He has also, at times, been the darling of intolerable bigots, though he invariably so alienated the latter that they became his critics. It may therefore be well to add that vast reverence for his intellectual gifts and abiding gratitude for the intellectual life he has lavishly communicated to, and nourished in, others, is in no way inconsistent with a recognition of necessary human limitations. To treasure a philosopher philosophically, is to treasure him for the right reasons. Love may go out to his faults, but not intellectual loyalty. Those most deeply indebted to him are no more free to give up the burden of independent thought in the name of Maritain than Maritain was in the name of Thomas.

A Recovery of Reverence

THE WATER AND THE FIRE. By Gerald Vann. Sheed & Ward. $2.75

By JOHN M. OESTERREICHER

"IT is not for nothing that the story of man begins in a garden," writes Father Vann. But today, torn from his roots in nature, man withers, body, mind and heart. More and more our life becomes unreal, because unnatural; things come to us at fourth or fifth remove from their natural state: canned food, canned music, air-conditioned rooms, reader's digests. We live in a cellophane age.

The sense of symbol is largely lost. To be sure, we still have practical indicators, road signs and barber poles. But we no longer feel that the very walls of our homes are to make a family one and secure from the elements and the dangers without; that the door opens to adventure and bids welcome to friend and stranger; that the window is a symbol of vision leading over fields to distant horizons, even to the eternal hills.

Vision is gone. It grows only in stillness, but this is the age of noise, a world which kills leisure and thus the sense of wonder and of mystery. It is a world which makes woman untrue to her vocation, and man as well. For we must all be feminine before we can hope to be truly masculine, contemplative before wisely and graciously active. Indeed, all things suffer, for woman is particularly the guardian of the dignity of matter.

Such is Father Vann's indictment of the modern world, but he is no prophet of gloom. Rather does he urge us to pray, labor and struggle, that education become again the search for wisdom; that, through the liturgy, the Church's daily life, reverence be recaptured; that woman be given back her great role; that community be organic again, "ensouled by *caritas;*" that the contemplative spirit, that love, be recovered; that matter be redeemed.

There is depth in Father Vann's book. In his chapter, "The Recovery of Love," he finds the epitome of true love in the words of the ancient marriage ritual, "With my body I thee worship," not "my body worships thy body"—pleasure for pleasure's sake; not "I worship thee"—the bloodless ideal of my imagination; not "with my body I possess thee"—the lust for power which makes a person a thing. Rather, "with my body I thee worship": I approach thee with wondering awe, tenderly and humbly, for the "thou," love, sex, the body, are mysteries, which are learned only by the patient.

In another chapter, "The Redemption of Matter," he stresses that in the doctrine of Mary the mother of God, the Church defends Mary's Son, while in Mary's assumption, she defends all of Mary's sons, indeed, the dignity and ultimate glory of human flesh and blood. At a time when the gulf between matter and spirit is ever widening, when despair of our civilization and of mankind's future clutches at us, the Church comes to our aid, in un-

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shaken voice declaring that Christ made dust splendid, that man is not doomed.

Insights like these are many in Father Vann's book, but there are some quotations to which I cannot reconcile myself. When he speaks of our need for roots in nature, for contact "with the rhythm of the cosmos," he quotes Guitton: "Though woman is detached from history, she is attached to life, which is more leisurely and more profound than history." More leisurely, perhaps, but more profound? Life I share with the animals, but history is man's alone. The rhythm of the cosmos at its most meaningful mirrors the mystery of redemption; I am redeemed, however, not by sun and seasons but by Jesus Christ who suffered under Pontius Pilate, by a fact in *history*.

Again, is it sufficient to caution us, as Father Vann does, that Dr. Jung speaks as a "psychological scientist"? For he allows him the term "christian mythology," and cites him: "A holy wedding is celebrated on the holy Sabbath, and a burning candle, as a phallic symbol, is plunged three times into the font, in order to fertilize the baptismal water." Are these really a scientist's terms of reference, or are they interpretations—indeed, bad interpretations? The Easter candle is not a phallic symbol but the sign of the Spirit's power, and baptism another virgin birth. I am not disturbed by the "juxtaposition of the sexual and the sacred," but by the inversion which interprets the higher in terms of the lower, which puts the shadow in the place of the light. No doubt, the pagan myths are man's groping for the redemption which is real in Christ; and it is important today, even necessary, to show their ultimate fulfillment in Him. But they are a stumbling search, a murky intimation, and therefore the work has to be done with utmost care. It was not without reason that the Israel of old and the early Church held them in horror.

That Father Vann leaves these quotations uncorrected is, I am sure, because he loves much. For if one thing stands out in his book, it is that he is a lover of man.

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FAITH AND PRAYER. By Vincent McNabb, O.P. Newman. $3.50

By ALBAN BAER

IN this volume are collected two series of conferences which Father McNabb delivered at Oxford in the first decade of this century. They are reprinted now, says Father Hilary Carpenter, who introduces them, to perpetuate not merely Father McNabb's memory but also his apostolate of Catholic Truth, carried on, among other places, in Hyde Park. The academic audience at which these conferences were aimed was very far from Hyde Park; nevertheless, they are enlivened by not a little apologetic and popular controversy. "They are in no sense dated," says Father Carpenter—and yet is is possible that had these lectures been written today there would be fewer references to Darwin and William James and more to Whitehead, Dewey and Professor Ayer. In other words, some of what Father McNabb had to say is now perhaps a little off the target. But this by no means invalidates his work as a whole.

In the conference on Faith he begins by using the chapters from the constitution *de Fide* of the Vatican Council as points of departure for a systematic discussion of the various types of unbelief (atheism, agnosticism, skepticism) and of errors regarding the nature of faith itself (ontologism, agnosticism, rationalism). He goes on to treat of the need for authority in matters of faith, the question of scruple and doubt—and then, as if this were all too dry, as in places it is, in a concluding chapter he speaks eloquently of the life of faith. He does not obscure its difficulties: "An infinite person will give rise to endless difficulties. He will be the answer to all else; but he himself will be the great enigma. In his light all shadows will flee, save those which he himself must cast. His shoulders will bear the burden of the world; but who will bear the burden of his infinity? Thus if we are to have true notions of God we must conceive of Him not merely as an end, but as a beginning, not merely as an answer but as a question, not merely as a parable but as a paradox, not merely as Omega but as Alpha, not merely as nearer man than the soul of a man, but above him on the everlasting hills." This passage will convey an adequate impression of the book.

The conferences on prayer follow a simpler pattern and it is suggested that they be read first. What Father McNabb has here to say about the theology and psychology of prayer is most valuable: he is less at home in the realm of liturgical prayer. The concluding chapter, on hindrances to prayer, will be found of practical use.

Jerusalem

THE HOLY PLACES. By Evelyn Waugh. British Book Centre. $4.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

IN a limited edition, Mr. Waugh has republished two essays: one, written after his first visit to the Holy Land, in 1932; the other, a *Life* piece written some twenty years later. He had always been fascinated, he relates in his introduction, by the human beings who linked England and Jerusalem: by Helena, whom legend made the daughter of a British chieftain, by Richard the Lion-Hearted, by Stratford-Canning and Lord Gordon. General Lord Allenby's gesture in dismounting to walk into the city on foot, as did his Maker (the Kaiser preferred to ride) was the prelude to "the first Christian government since the fall of the Crusader's kingdom." Mr. Waugh found it "the purest and most benevolent which the land had known since the age of Constantine."

Then, he recalls, the Zionists were "decent, rather cranky young peole, innocently occupied in the cultivation of grapefruit." Between his first and second visit the British surrendered "their mandate to rule the Holy Land from low motives of cowardice, sloth and parsimony." The internationalization of "the most sacred city in the world" followed. On Dec. 11, 1948, the General As-

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sembly of the United Nations proclaimed Jerusalem unique and granted it international status. "Now," Mr. Waugh points out, "by a double act of aggression as flagrant as the invasion of South Korea," the city has become a battleground, and "stands as a chilly monument to the moral confusion of our rulers."

In Korea the one act of aggression was at least resisted and thousands of British, American and Turkish, as well as Korean soldiers died that the aggressor might be halted. Not a single U.S. nor any other UN soldier has died to defend the Holy City, and Mr. Waugh may not be the only man to wonder why one act of aggression in one place should be taken so seriously, and two in another be so entirely disregarded? Mr. Waugh is above all a Christian, and therefore to him the Holy Places are physical, geographical and historical evidences of one unique Life that implacably altered the destiny of mankind and of each individual human being. Helena is important because, in an age when the temptation was to etherealize, to gnosticize Christianity and reduce it to symbols and spiritual uplift, she found some buried planks of wood that were once and for all the manner of our redemption. Jerusalem is important, because so long as its Holy Places exist, so long as the Sepulchre rock is there, with the squabbling sects offering God to Himself all night long, Christendom still is geographically centered. And there today, Christianity and Islam, world religions in that each offer a cosmic system of the relations of all mankind to God, and Judaism, the religion of a nation "once dispersed, now partly reassembled into a national state" are met together in closer proximity than "any place else."

REVIEWERS

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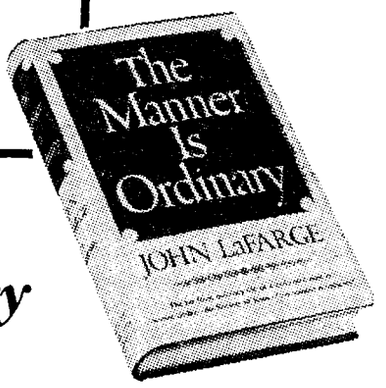

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